

## Message Text

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44

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCCT-01 SSO-00 IO-10 SAB-01 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 /069 W

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P R 051207Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3893

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 2544

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y - T E X T

BEIRUT PASS BAGHDAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, SY

SUBJ: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON RECENT ARMED CLASHES IN DAMASCUS

REF: DAMASCUS 2510

1. SMOLDERING TENSION CONTINUES IN DAMASCUS AS RESULT OF  
CONTINUED POLITICAL DISPUTE WITH IRAQ AND RECENT ARMED CLASHES  
IN AND NEAR DAMASCUS (REFTEL. JUNE 30 INCIDENT IN NORTHERN  
QUARTER OF DAMASCUS MAY HAVE INVOLVED ATTEMPT ON BAATH PARTY  
REGIONAL COMMAND MEMBER, FAHMI AL-YOUSSEFI, AND WAS QUELLED  
ONLY AFTER SECURITY FORCES HAD LANDED HELICOPTER ON ROOF OF  
BUILDING.

2. BARZE VILLAGE INCIDENT WAS CLEARLY SECTARIAN IN ORIGIN  
WHEN ALAWITE MEMBERS OF RIF'AT AL-ASAD'S REPUBLICAN GUARD  
ATTEMPTED CRASH SUNNI WEDDING OVER JUNE 28-29 WEEKEND. BROTHER  
OF BRIDE REPORTEDLY KILLED ONE GUARD MEMBER AND LATER THAT  
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NIGHT OTHER GUARDS THREW GRENADE INTO SUNNI CAFE. SUNNIS

THEN BURNED SEVERAL ALAWITE HOUSES IN BARZE. SARG REACTED VIGOROUSLY, SENDING BOTH ARMY AND SECURITY FORCES UNDER AIR FORCE COMMANDER NAJI JAMIL (SUNNI), AND RIF'AT AL-ASAD (ALAWITE) TO RESTORE ORDER NEXT DAY. SARG'S VIEW, AS EXPRESSED TO AMBASSADOR BY HIGH-RANKING FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL, WAS THAT SUCH SECTARIAN DISPUTES HAD TO BE SUPPRESSED FIRMLY LESS SYRIAN SLIP INTO INTER-CONFESSIONAL STRIFE AS HAS BEEN HAPPENING IN LEBANON.

3. LIBYAN AMBASSADOR TOLD AMBASSADOR JULY 5 HE HAD HEARD FROM IRAQI AMBASSADOR THAT MASSIVE ARREST OF IRAQI CITIZENS IN SYRIA HAD BEGUN THAT DAY. LIBYAN AMBASSADOR ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT ACCORDING TO ONE OF HIS CONTACTS IN SYRIAN SECURITY, SYRIA HAD JUST ABOUT CONCLUDED THAT IRAQI REGIME AS SUCH WAS NOT CAPABLE OF MOUNTING THESE RECENT INCIDENTS. SYRIAN SECURITY INCLINED TO ATTRIBUTE THEM TO FOLLOWERS OF AMIN AL-HAFIZ OR SALAH JEDID BUT SUSPICION CONTINUES ATTACH TO HABBASH'S PFLP AND MOSLEM BROTHERHOOD AS WELL.

4. COMMENT: NUMBER OF INCIDENTS AND THEIR ORIGIN STILL NOT CLEAR BUT SYRIAN SECURITY OBVIOUSLY CONCERNED ABOUT RISING TENSION AND UNCERTAINTY IN COUNTRY. HOPE UPCOMING APPOINTMENT WITH CHIEF OF STAFF SHIHABI WILL PROVIDE AT MINIMUM THE OFFICIAL VERSION OF THESE EVENTS.  
MURPHY

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## Message Attributes

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**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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